

Review of Region 6 Emergency Management Plans

Executive Summary

Washington State's Homeland Security Region 6 has successfully developed strategies and plans to deal with the many different types of natural disasters that are common to the Puget Sound Area. Because of the September 11, 2001, attacks and other incidents, there has been an increased national emphasis to become better prepared for terrorist events. Region 6 has received grant funds provided by the Department of Homeland Security for terrorism preparedness. The Region 6 Emergency Management Advisory Council and the Regional Homeland Security Subcommittee initiated the development of a regional Homeland Security Strategic Plan to provide direction and priority for the expenditures of these grants.

As part of Strategic Plan Project's Phase 1, "Assessment of the Current Environment," the ICF Team has evaluated 29 emergency management plans, planning guides and assessments. The review of these plans was part of a larger research effort to determine identified threats and vulnerabilities, planning priorities, and the Region's capabilities and available response resources. We also reviewed each of the Plans to see if any components of the Department of Homeland Security Statewide Template Initiative were included and useful in this process.

This document is intended as a reference that summarizes the type of information contained in the Plans. Using the data contained in the Plans, and combining the data gathered from interviewing subject matter experts, provides the basis for a sound assessment of the current state of regional homeland security planning. Collaboratively, we can then develop where Region 6 would like to be in the short-term (two to five years) and the long-term (5-10 years).⁴

Review of the Plans revealed three strategic issues that apply to the development of a Region 6 Homeland Security Strategic Plan:

- **Coordinated regional planning should clearly state priorities and include accountability measures.** Many of the regional or statewide plans include a comprehensive detailed listing of challenges, planning goals and objectives. However, because these lists are so comprehensive there is no clear idea of what issue is more important or has a greater priority.

⁴ The plans were not reviewed for accuracy or evaluated against its purpose or objectives.

Many of the Plans include goals, objectives and strategic activities. These planning goals, objectives and strategies should include accountability and designate a specific entity as the lead. In addition, a timeline for executing goals, objectives and implementing these strategic activities should be included. The timeline should cover milestones, annual budget schedule and measures of progress.

- **A summary assessment of regional assets, needs, threats and vulnerabilities is needed.** The Washington State HIVA and the King County HIVA do not reflect risk analysis data that would assist in developing priorities for Region 6. Both of these assessments provide a good overview of the types of threats and hazards faced throughout Region 6. A more detailed assessment that includes an assessment of prioritized assets and the vulnerability to various types of threat is needed. Individual jurisdictions and Region 6 may have this gathered this information during the development of the Washington State Homeland Security Strategic Plan and the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This information should be analyzed to determine what threats pose the greatest danger.

An inventory of current response assets and capabilities is needed to determine where there is unnecessary duplication and where there are gaps. This inventory could also be expanded to include private assets and resources. To maximize response capabilities, this inventory could be the basis for joint budget analysis. Jurisdictions within Region 6 could maximize scarce financial resources and strengthen response capabilities by sharing response resources and strategically acquiring new response assets.

- **Regional response plans must be tested to identify strengths and weaknesses and to solidify partnerships.** Region 6 is ahead of many other states with respect to regional cooperation. There is a strong culture of collaboration. The fact that so many regional plans exist and that many of these plans were developed by workgroups that cross geographic boundaries, are multidisciplinary and cover both private and public sector entities is a clear demonstration that there is a spirit of regional partnership. But many of these plans are new. The strengths and weaknesses of the Plans and regional partnerships will only become evident during exercise, drills, and real-life events.

Additional discussion and review with technical experts on organizational capacity building, emergency planning, and response operations will allow us to identify the gaps between the current state and the desirable future state. With the input of these experts, we will help identify strategic goals for the direction of Region 6's homeland security efforts. We will also identify challenges and present recommendations and specific actions to meet and overcome them.

Methodology

ICF reviewed 29 emergency management plans to identify changes that need to be made and a method for prioritizing those changes to improve the County's emergency preparedness and response capabilities. We specifically looked for threats and vulnerabilities, planning priorities, and the Region's capabilities and available response resources. Regional plans and State plans such as the Washington State Homeland Security Strategic Plan, the Urban Area Security Initiative, the King County Emergency Management Plan – Basic Plan 2002, the regional Disaster Plan, and the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan provided us with an understanding of the coordination and capabilities on a regional level.

Coordinated regional planning should clearly state priorities and include accountability measures.

Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

The protection of life, public safety and health, and public property are the primary concerns of the King County government.

The Washington Statewide Homeland Security Strategic Plan lists eight strategic priorities:

- Fusing and sharing intelligence information among public and private sector entities.
- Enhancing healthcare and public health systems to ensure a surge capacity for emergencies and large-scale disasters.
- Training, equipping, and exercising emergency responders to assure their readiness for complex emergency responses.
- Assessing and protecting key assets and critical infrastructure, including interdependent physical and cyber information systems.
- Planning for and providing continuity of government and business operations before, during, and after large-scale disasters.
- Assuring elected officials, community and business leaders, volunteers, and citizens are well informed and fully prepared to operate in an emergency environment.
- Protecting and supporting continuous functioning of interoperable communications and public safety information systems.
- Executing proactive deterrence, preemption, and prevention initiatives.

Appendix C of the Statewide Strategic Plan follows the DHS Statewide Template. Many of the responses to questions in the statewide template have direct applicability to Region 6.

Findings

Given the broad, overarching strategic priorities of the *State* Homeland Security Strategic Plan, it is not difficult to apply these same themes and goals to Region 6. The priorities listed in the State Homeland Security Strategic Plan provide a comprehensive overview of all the issues that emergency managers grapple with daily. Many other States would have the same list of challenges. Because the priorities listed in the State Homeland Security Strategic Plan encompass the wide range of issues challenging emergency managers, it does not provide a true sense of what areas should be addressed first.

Additionally, many of the Plans list goals, objectives, and strategies without listing a lead agency or a timeline for implementing these strategies. Accountability, milestones, and a schedule for completion are necessary elements for the successful implementation of any strategy.

A summary assessment of regional assets, needs, threats and vulnerabilities is needed.

Threats and Vulnerabilities

Washington State and King County both conducted a HIVA. The 2001 Washington State HIVA describes natural and technological (human-made) hazards which can potentially impact the people, economy, environment, and property of Washington State. The Washington State HIVA lists specifically the type of threat, the geographic area or sector most at risk, what actions are being done to mitigate against these hazards/threats, and recommendations on types of activities that should be implemented to further prevent or protect against the hazards/threats. Washington State's geographic location makes it vulnerable to avalanches, droughts, earthquakes, floods, landslides, tsunamis, volcanic activity, and wildland fires. The economic, cultural, and social infrastructure of Washington State makes it a likely target for human-made threats. Washington is vulnerable to chemical and civil disturbances, dam failure, energy shortages and utility failures, hazardous material or pipeline accidents, chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive terrorist attacks, cyber-terrorist attacks, transportation failures, and urban fires.

King County conducted its own HIVA. The plan sorts incidents into three categories: incidents that are high probability events occur once a year; moderate probability events occur once every two to ten years; and low probability events occur once every 10 to 50 years. According to the King County HIVA, King County is likely to experience a terrorist event once in every two to 10 years--moderate probability event with a high level of impact.

The information regarding terrorism and homeland security described in the Washington State and King County HIVAs agrees with the findings in the Washington State-wide Homeland Security Strategic Plan. Historical attractions, monuments and cultural centers, internationally prominent companies, military facilities, ports, nuclear and chemical facilities impacting Region 6 make this area an especially attractive target for terrorists.

Findings

Determining risk is especially difficult for terrorism because the probability of an attack is very difficult to quantify. However, risk assessment is a critical first step to developing an approach for mitigating against, preparing for and responding to hazards. Currently FEMA requires State and local government to assess the risk of human (technological and terrorism) incidents as part of the process of developing a mitigation plan. The FEMA guidance, Integrating Human-Caused Hazards in Mitigation Planning, suggest an asset-specific approach to identify at-risk critical facilities and systems in the community. Once a comprehensive list of assets has been developed, it should be prioritized so the community can protect those assets first. Beginning with those prioritized assets, the vulnerability of each facility or system for each type of terrorism hazard should be

assessed. Before developing the Washington Statewide Strategic Plan, all jurisdictions were required to conduct a threat and vulnerability analysis, following a procedure similar to the one recommended by FEMA, and submit their analysis to the State. There is also mention of detailed critical facility data located in "Annex D" of Section 6: Vulnerability Analysis of the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This Annex is not disclosed to the public. The jurisdictional/regional risk assessment data gathered for the development of the State Homeland Security Strategic Plan and the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be helpful for developing priorities in the regional Strategic Plan. This information should be analyzed to obtain a *regional* risk assessment of threats and vulnerabilities. Currently, the King County HIVA and the Washington State HIVA does not reflect a risk analysis that would assist in developing priorities for Region 6.

A regional risk assessment would be further enhanced by a geographic assessment of where these events are most likely to occur and potential communities impacted. For example, a complete assessment would include what structures, communities, and organizations are more likely to be targeted based on a specific vulnerability assessment.

Response Capabilities and Limitations

Many of the Plans included very good descriptions of responsibilities. The Washington Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan identifies State agencies and other participating organizations with responsibilities for emergency management at the State level. The King County Emergency Management Plan provides comparable information for county agencies and organizations with emergency management responsibilities. The Regional Disaster Plan for Public and Private Organizations specifies responsibilities according to Emergency Support Function. From the description of the responsibilities, emergency managers can determine what types of assets and response capabilities they must retain.

The King County Emergency Management Plan also describes what factors will limit or hinder disaster response and relief activities:

- The inability of the general citizenry to be self-sufficient for more than three days without additional supplies of food, water, medical and shelter resources.
- The lack of Police, Fire, emergency medical, public works, water supply, regional transportation and sewage treatment services response due to damaged facilities, equipment and shortages of personnel.
- The shortage of critical drugs and medicines at medical facilities due to reduced emergency storage capacities.
- Damage to lifelines such as road, rail, air transportation routes, seaport terminals, utilities, petroleum pipelines and communications networks. Normal distribution of resources may be curtailed or reduced, impacting the social and economic infrastructure of the County.
- Damage to responder communications by equipment damage or overloading of landline and cellular telephone lines, including the lines for 911 centers.
- Large movements of people as refugees within King County will stress all resource systems, particularly shelter, food, water, and medical.

Washington State Law also prevents local jurisdictions from performing nuclear attack planning, placing extra responsibilities for the radiological threat on State and Federal partners

The Washington State Reentry and Recovery Plan identifies those actions that State agencies must take to support themselves, other State agencies and local jurisdictions and to coordinate emergency recovery activities at the conclusion of the response activities. The Recovery and Reentry Plan establishes uniform policies for effective coordination to accomplish reentry and recovery tasks resulting from a natural or technological emergency or disaster. This Plan describes the various categories of emergencies likely to occur and the actions required to manage the effects of the events. The Plan is based on certain assumptions and the existence of specific resources and capabilities that may be subject to frequent change. Actual measures taken by the State to support local jurisdictions will be tailored to each emergency.

Findings

Many of the Plans reviewed provided a detailed list of responsibilities. From this list, Agency and Division Directors may ascertain what types of response assets and personnel are needed. We noted that although Agencies might know their own response assets and capabilities, this information is not shared. None of the Plans reviewed revealed an assessment of regional assets and response capabilities. An inventory of current regional assets and capabilities will help determine what response capabilities and technology are needed and where there is duplication. To obtain a complete and accurate inventory, private organizations should be included. To maximize response capabilities, joint budget analysis could be undertaken at a regional level to avoid duplication and obtain much needed resources.

Regional response plans must be tested to identify strengths and weaknesses and to solidify partnerships.

Regional Collaboration and Focus

Many of the Plans reviewed demonstrated a strong culture of collaboration and working together. Most of the more comprehensive plans, such as the Washington State-wide Homeland Security Strategic Plan, the Urban Area Security Initiative–Seattle King County Urban Area Strategy and the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan demonstrate that strong working groups and partnerships have been formed to develop these plans. King County also has nine established regional working groups focused on coordinating emergency preparedness and response; one more, the law enforcement task force, will be established. However, because many of these plans are new, this means that these partnerships have not been tested through training exercises, drills or real events. Over time, these relationships will become more solidified as training and exercise programs described in these regional plans are implemented.



Figure 1: Regional Committees

Region 6 has also taken initial steps to incorporate private entities into response operations. The Regional Disaster Plan for Public and Private Organizations coordinates response activities and capabilities of public and private organizations. Currently there are a total of 115 signatories, including one non-profit, 11 private companies (including Boeing and Microsoft, the biggest employers in the Region), 18 medical facilities, 13 schools, 22 sewer and water districts, 17 fire districts, and 33 cities. This is an impressive list of signatories but, similar to other regional plans, this plan needs to be practiced to test strengths and weaknesses.

Findings

Region 6 has a good foundation to build a strong regional response operation. But many of the partnerships and the Plans in place are new and have not been tested. Exercise, drills, and other training activities are needed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these plans and relationships. Region 6 should continue to include private organizations and incorporate them in training activities.

Additional Plans that should be Developed or Reviewed

Our review of emergency management plans show that some plans are missing. Effective regional response requires strong COOP/COG plans. A well tested regional Communication Plan is also needed for effective response coordination.

Next Steps

The ICF team will use the information described in the Plans, combined with information gathered from the interviews to develop an overall picture of the current state. Our current State assessment will be verified at the Strategic Planning Session to be held on March 5, 2004. Following this session, the ICF team will build a list of goals and objectives to help resolve the gaps between where the Region would like to be and its current state.

List of Plans Reviewed

Plans with Content Specific to Strategic Planning

- Washington State Emergency Management Division Statewide Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2004
- Washington State Emergency Management Division Statewide Strategic Plan, 2002
- Washington State Emergency Management Division Statewide Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment, 2001
- Regional Disaster Plan for Public and Private Organizations in King County
- Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Urban Area Security Initiative Strategic Plan Seattle-King County Urban Area Strategy: Goals and Objectives
- King County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment
- King County Emergency Management Plan - Basic Plan 2002

Other Response Plans Reviewed

- Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning Guide
- Emergency Management Division Advance Measures Standard Operating Procedures
- Emergency Management Division Emergency Operations Plan
- Emergency Management Division Model School Plan and Planning Guide
- Emergency Management Division Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service Plan
- Emergency Management Division Telecommunications Service Priority Plan
- Emergency Management Division Washington State Recovery Plan
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact
- Fire Resources Mobilization Plan
- Hospital Incident Command System
- Integrated Fixed Facility Radiological and Chemical Protection Plan
- Inter-County Mutual Aid Agreement Template
- King County Emergency Management Plan
- Northwest Area Contingency Plan
- Orange County California Hospital Emergency Incident Command System Plan
- Oregon Personnel and Equipment Cost Reimbursement Schedule
- Oregon, Washington Interstate Fire Protection Operational Plan
- Planning for Electric Power Disruptions
- State Fire Mobilization Plan
- University of Washington Emergency Response Management Plan